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Unlike most applicants, I waited until my senior year to apply for an internship. I looked at all possibilities, but the one that stuck out the most and the one that I really wanted was with the Public Health Service/Indian Health Service. Being Native American, I could think of no other way to help support and give guidance to my fellow Natives. I was also pushed by one of my professors, retired Captain Pat Bohan, who also served in the Corps and with the Indian Health Service. Upon applying I was unsure about receiving a phone call from one of the service units because of the high competition for open COSTEP spots, but I did.

That call came from LCDR Celeste Davis in Santa Fe, NM. She too was an alumna from East Central University and was interested in hiring me on for the summer. She asked me if I had a preference on coming to Santa Fe or going to Taos. I told her that it did not matter, but Taos sounded cool. In the end, I went to Taos and I have no regrets about where I ended up. CAPT Bohan told me that doing a COSTEP was like going on vacation and getting paid at the same time, and he was right. Although the pay was great, the location that I landed in was beautiful. Taos is located in northern NM and is in a valley surrounded by mountains.



My preceptor, LT Joel Hustedt, had already found me a great place to live upon arriving and I didn't even have to bring bed sheets because it was fully furnished. The office that I worked out of was located in a clinic on the Taos Pueblo. My duties for the summer were to assist my preceptor as well as independently conduct surveys of temporary food stands, head starts, mass gatherings, food service programs, and tribal facilities. Aside from working inside I also assisted with rabies clinics and a car seat clinic at the Taos Pueblo head start. I also had to do a project that pertained to injury issues and how to prevent and control those problems.

The four tribes that we worked with were the Taos and Picuris Pueblos, Ohkay Owingeh (formerly known as the San Juan Pueblo), and the Jicarilla Apache. Each tribe presented

unique problems and concerns related to Environmental Health. Having these four tribes to work with helped me become a better COSTEP and hopefully a commissioned officer, because even though one problem may be the same for all tribes, the solution is never the same. This helped me become better rounded and showed me to clearly look over every aspect in situations before making a decision.



My COSTEP experience has been the best experience for my career, even if I do not end up with the Public Health Service or Indian Health Service. It showed me how to be professional, understanding, thorough, and responsible. It also has given me a great opportunity to meet new people and places that I have only dreamt about until now. I strongly recommend to anyone that is looking for an internship to look into being a COSTEP. LT Hustedt and LCDR Davis made my stay enjoyable and working with people such as these two have made me a better person and showed me there is more to life than work.